



April 9, 2004

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION BY GREAT RIVER ENERGY (GRE) FOR
APPROVAL OF A MINOR ALTERATION TO A SUBSTATION IN STEARNS
COUNTY**

GRE has submitted an application on behalf of Stearns Electric Association to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Chair for a Minor Alteration of the Westwood Substation in St. Joseph Township, Minnesota.

The project includes the addition of a new 115 kV transformer and high-side facilities within the existing fenced area of the substation and a 115 kV 2-way switch structure just outside the fence. GRE will also construct a short tap line (approximately 150 feet) between the high side structure in the substation and the switch structure outside the substation. Xcel Energy will design, construct and own the new switch structure. The 115 kV option is intended to unload the flow on the existing 69 kV system, thereby delaying major upgrades on the 69 kV system, and to improve reliability by feeding the Westwood Substation from two different sources (69 kV and 115 kV).

GRE maintains that the project as proposed constitutes a Minor Alteration. A Minor Alteration is a change in an existing transmission line that does not result in significant changes in the human or environmental impact of the facility. In accordance with Minnesota Rules, part 4400.3820, the EQB Chair is providing notice to the public that GRE has applied for approval of this project. The public has until April 23, 2004, to submit comments on this project. The Chair will decide within ten days after close of the public comment period whether to authorize the Minor Alteration, bring the matter to the board for consideration, or determine that the alteration is not minor and requires a full permitting decision.

To submit comments, ask questions, or seek further information about this proposed project, please contact David Birkholz at (651) 296-2878 or david.birkholz@state.mn.us.